

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (previously presented) A method of controlling a blasting network which includes an assembly of detonators, said method including the steps of designating at least one unsafe message, placing a communication link between a control unit and the network in a control mode in which the communication link is monitored for the unsafe message, in said control mode preventing the unsafe message, when detected, from reaching the assembly of detonators, and placing the communication link in an operational mode in which any previously designated unsafe message is allowed to reach the assembly of detonators, and wherein in both the control mode and the operational mode any message which has not been designated as unsafe is permitted to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators via the communication link.
2. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein in the control mode of the communication link the or each unsafe message is prevented from reaching the assembly of detonators by preventing the onward transmission of the unsafe message.
3. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 1 wherein in the control mode of the communication link the or each unsafe message is prevented from reaching the assembly of detonators by scrambling the or each designated unsafe message so that it is no longer unsafe.
4. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 3 which includes, in the operational mode of the communication link, the steps of detecting a scrambled

unsafe message, unscrambling the detected scrambled unsafe message, and transmitting the unscrambled unsafe message to the assembly of detonators.

5. (currently amended) [A] The method according to any one of claims 1 to [4] of claim 1 which includes the step of designating at least two unsafe messages.

6. (currently amended) A method of controlling a blasting network which includes an assembly of detonators, said method including the steps of designating at least two unsafe messages, placing a communication link between a control unit and the network in a control mode in which the communication link is monitored for the unsafe messages, in said control mode preventing the unsafe messages, when detected, from reaching the assembly of detonators, and placing the communication link in an operational mode in which any previously designated unsafe message is allowed to reach the assembly of detonators, wherein in both the control mode and the operational mode any message which has not been designated as unsafe is permitted to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators via the communication link, and wherein the two designated unsafe messages are respectively equated with arm and fire commands.

7. (previously presented) A system for controlling a blasting network which includes an assembly of detonators, said system including a control unit and a communication link for the network, the communication link being capable of being placed in a control mode and in an operational mode, and a monitoring device for monitoring the communication link for at least one previously designated unsafe message, wherein the communication link in its control mode prevents any detected unsafe message from being transmitted to the assembly of detonators and in its operational mode permits any previously designated unsafe message to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators, and wherein in both its control mode and its operational mode the communication link permits

any message which has not been designated as unsafe to be transmitted to the assembly of detonators via the communication link.

8. (previously presented) A system for controlling a blasting network according to claim 7 wherein in the control mode of the communication link the onward transmission of the or each unsafe message, when detected, is prevented.

9. (withdrawn) A system for controlling a blasting network according to claim 7 wherein the or each unsafe message, when detected, is scrambled.

10. (withdrawn) A system for controlling a blasting network according to claim 9 wherein in the operational mode of the communication link any scrambled unsafe message is detected and unscrambled for transmission of the unscrambled unsafe message to the assembly of detonators.

11. (currently amended) A system for controlling a blasting network according to ~~any one of claims 7 to 10~~ claim 7 wherein the control unit is capable of generating legal unsafe messages, which are transmitted via the communication link in its operational mode.

12. (currently amended) A system for controlling a blasting network according to ~~any one of claims 7 to 10~~ claim 7 wherein the monitoring device is a filter.

13. (currently amended) A system for controlling a blasting network according to ~~any one of claims 7 to 10~~ claim 7 wherein the communication link is placed in its control and operational modes by means of a switch.

14. (currently amended) A blasting system including a system for controlling a blasting network according to ~~any one of claims 7 to 10~~ claim 7 connected to a blasting network including an assembly of detonators.

15. (previously presented) A blasting system according to claim 14 wherein the control unit of the system for controlling a blasting network is capable of generating legal unsafe messages, which are transmitted via the communication link in its operational mode.
16. (previously presented) A blasting system according to claim 14 wherein the monitoring device of the system for controlling a blasting network is a filter.
17. (previously presented) A blasting system according to claim 14 wherein the communication link of the system for controlling a blasting network is placed in its control and operational modes by means of a switch.